

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2 and 5 have been amended to more clearly define the invention therein.

Claim 2 has been amended as requested by the Examiner. The word "a" (both occurrences) has been deleted.

Independent claims 1 and 5 have each been amended to add a step in which the previously formed clear coating of aluminum oxide is colored. The goal of producing a colored, anodized coating on the magnesium containing aluminum alloy is clearly stated throughout the application. Methods for coloring the clear anodized coating are disclosed on pages 11 and 12 of the application as filed.

The first step of independent claim 1 produces a clear anodized layer suitable for color finishing on an aluminum alloy containing more than three percent by weight magnesium. The second step of amended claim 1 produces the color finish. Similarly, amended claim 5 recites a method in which a sheet of aluminum alloy containing more than about four percent by weight magnesium is formed into a body component for an automotive vehicle. A surface of the body component is anodized under specified conditions to form a clear coating of aluminum oxide having a thickness of about ten to twenty five micrometers. Then the clear coating is colored to provide the decorative finish on the surface of the body component.

The amendments to independent claims 1 and 5 are responsive to comments made by the Examiner in this Action. The Examiner is urged to consider and allow the amended claims at this stage of the prosecution, or to enter them for purposes of an appeal.

Claims 1-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) as being unpatentable over the U.S. Patent 5,975,976 to Sekinger, et al. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the rejection and to allow the amended claim set for the following reasons.

The amendments to independent claims 1 and 5 now affirmatively introduce the coloring step implied in the claims as filed. Each of claims 1 and 5 now contains an affirmative step of coloring the clear coating of aluminum oxide that was produced by a previous process step. Claims 1 (amended) and 5 (amended) do not introduce new matter, nor do they raise new issues of patentability requiring further search or

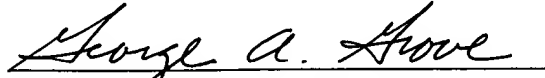
consideration by the Examiner. The Examiner's comments in the Office Actions are appreciated and it is submitted that the amendments to claims 1 and 5 are responsive to suggestions implicit in these Actions. The Examiner has acknowledged that the Sekinger, et al. reference does not teach producing a clear anodized layer suitable for color finishing. Nor does the Sekinger reference teach how to produce colored or decorative coatings on magnesium containing, aluminum alloys. Sekinger discloses how to make a mold comprising an anodized aluminum surface for a field emission device. But the Examiner has maintained the rejection of claims 1-7 because they did not contain limitations that suitably distinguished them from the Sekinger patent. Such limitations have been added to independent claims 1 and 5.

The object of the subject invention is to produce clear coatings of aluminum oxide on relatively high magnesium content aluminum alloys, clear coatings that can receive a decorative color finish. This is an achievement that has not previously been accomplished as indicated in prior art submitted by the applicants herein. Independent claims 1 and 5 and thus all of the claims in the case now affirmatively recite the coloring of the clear anodized coating to produce new and decorative articles of manufacture.

Thus, the claims in the case fully recite processes that are not contemplated in any way by the Sekinger et al reference, or any other prior art of which applicants are aware. It is believed that the claims are presented in a form in which they are clearly allowable. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner remove the rejection to claims 1-7, and allow these claims, and pass this case to issue.

Respectfully Submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

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In the claims:

1. (Amended) A method of forming a colored bright anodized coating on a surface of an aluminum alloy article, when said alloy contains more than three percent by weight magnesium, said method comprising

anodizing said surface in an aqueous sulfuric acid bath containing 100 to 200 grams of sulfuric acid per liter of bath at a temperature and a current density that produces a desired thickness of a clear anodized layer suitable for color finishing and coloring said clear anodized layer to produce said colored coating.

2. (Twice Amended) A method as recited in Claim 1 in which said anodizing is conducted at [a] said temperature that is in the range of 18 to 25°C and at [a] said current density that is in the range of about 3 A/ft² to no more than 10 A/ft².

5. (Amended) A method of making a body component for an automotive vehicle, said component comprising a formed sheet of an aluminum alloy containing more than about four percent by weight magnesium, said method comprising

forming said sheet into a body component having a surface requiring a decorative finish,

anodizing said surface in an aqueous sulfuric acid bath comprising 100 to 200 grams per liter of sulfuric acid at a temperature in the range of about 18 to 25°C and at a current density in the range of about three to no more than ten amperes per square foot of said surface to form a clear coating of aluminum oxide having a thickness of about ten to 25 micrometers, and

coloring said clear coating of aluminum oxide to produce said decorative finish.